

Press Release

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LEVINE SEEKS PAPER TRAIL TO SAFEGUARD ELECTRONIC VOTES

Touch-Screen Voting Wave of the Future, But Seeing is Believing Assemblymember Says

LOS ANGELES – Assembly Majority Whip Lloyd Levine (D-Van Nuys) announced legislation Thursday to ensure proper safeguards – including ballot paper trails – are used when elections are held using new touch-screen technology. Secretary of State Kevin Shelley in his ongoing fight to provide secure and accurate elections joined him at the press conference.

“Seeing is believing,” Levine said. “Paper trails will give voters greater confidence in our new voting systems – and in the results they produce.”

Levine said he strongly supports the use of touch-screen voting systems, which will be available to nearly 5 million voters for the first time in Tuesday’s statewide primary. But he wants to be sure the new systems are equipped with proper safeguards.

“California is taking a giant leap forward by abandoning the punch-card ballots that gave us the infamous hanging-chad problem in Florida,” Levine said. “But I am troubled by one aspect of the touch-screen technology: The absence of a ‘paper trail’ that lets every voter see the vote they cast.”

“The new systems have not proven entirely trouble-free”, Levine said. “During last October’s recall election, votes in one county were temporarily credited to the wrong candidate.”

Levine has introduced Assembly Bill 2843, which would ensure that all voting systems in California produce written records of each vote. Each voter would verify written record at the time it is cast, and would then be available to elections officials in the event of an audit or a recount.

Levine unveiled his proposal at a news conference at the Central Library downtown, one of 16 sites throughout Los Angeles County where citizens can vote early using touch-screen technology. Levine also cast his own primary vote at the site.

“Requiring a voter verified paper audit trail is a key element for ensuring the integrity of the voting process,” Secretary of State Kevin Shelley said. “I commend Assemblymember Lloyd Levine for efforts in this area and look forward to working with him.”

Levine's measure is awaiting a hearing in the Assembly. The lawmaker said he had asked the Assembly and Senate Elections Committees to hold a joint hearing as soon as possible to examine the issues surrounding computerized voting and paper trails.

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